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# GANDHI : THE MASTER



# GANDHI: THE MASTER

BY

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## P R E F A C E

I N this book, are collected most of my later day articles on Gandhiji, outside the book 'I follow the Mahatma'. Some day, if God wills, I shall write of him—particularly of the great part he played in the shaping of my life, as he did for several scores of people.

Gandhiji's achievements were great indeed; they were mostly the result of the immeasurable personal influence which he exercised over those who came into personal contact with him. The lives of many men were changed by this influence. Some followed him as disciples. Others willingly offered him all that they had, or whatever he wanted. To most men who came to him, he was a father confessor. In that sense, he was the Master.

But there was another sense in which he was a Master. He lived as an instrument of the Divine. He had no aim in life except to fulfil the Purpose as he saw it. He came to an age which thought that the limits of its ignorance were the frontiers of possible knowledge. He taught it the power of the prayer, the validity of the Divine Power, the nobility of the consecrated life.

To me he was a living commentary on the

*Gita* and the *Yogasutra*. I tried to study what he was, rather than what he did. I tried haltingly to follow his directions ; often I could not. But one thing I learnt from him was to be true to oneself first—a very difficult thing to do. Of that supreme art of life, of the art of attaining the absolute integration of personality, he was the Master.

If I have succeeded in some measure in presenting him as I saw him, I shall consider the publication of these articles fully justified.

Bangalore,

K. M. MUNSHI

May 22, 1948

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## CHAPTER I

# Gandhi : The Master

ABOVE and beyond the storm of the war-ridden world sits Gandhiji surrounded by the four walls of the Aga Khan Palace, spinning, praying. The British statesmen think they have locked him up ; and yet he dominates the world from behind the prison bars, this descendant of the line of great prophets who have stood for the Moral Order against the forces of Barbarism. For several years now I have acknowledged him a Master. And this is mainly because of what he is, for what he is is immeasurably greater than what he says or does.

The world is by now familiar with what Gandhiji is at least by face and figure. Contemporaries have tried to catch him in picturesque phrases. Mrs. Naidu calls him 'Micky Mouse'. Churchill once called him contemptuously 'A Naked Fakir.' Somebody said he looked a 'Satyr'. I stated in *I Follow the Mahatma* :

"The bald head, the hooked nose, the toothless mouth, the large straight set ears—not to forget the inevitable goat, which, by the way, I have never seen him in company with—have attracted

the pen of the caricaturists and the art of vaudeville directors. My experience has been quite different. When I see him I only see the smile lighting up the world around him with joy, and the eyes enveloping me with affectionate understanding. I hear the voice which thrills me. Sometimes I keep company with the springy feet which remind me of undying youth. On occasions I hear him lay down the law with the serene immutability of one 'speaking with authority.'

"And every time I attend his prayers I see in the fragile body seated before me draped in white, with eyes closed and head bowed in humble submission to God, only a self-forged instrument of something above and beyond me, which communicates through it love, inspiration and wisdom which passeth understanding."

On August 9, 1942 he was imprisoned in the Aga Khan Palace and since then I saw him only twice, for a few minutes each time, when he went on a twenty-one days' fast in February last. But I have no doubt his day in the Aga Khan's Palace is as self-contained an epitome of a lifetime as it was at Sevagram before August last.

It is a wonderful day at Sevagram. Rest and relaxation, well-adjusted hours for exercise, food and sleep, prayers and solitude, all find place in the day's programme of work which embraces almost every activity known to public life. Up at the '*brahmamuhurta*'—4 a.m., the hour held sacred by the Rishis for rising—he has his morning

prayers. Then he has a walk, often with a companion, an anxious politician, a recalcitrant follower, or a sorrowing wife seeking solace in a domestic tangle. Of late, on account of failing health, he goes for a walk after sunrise, when often a little crowd follows him at a reverential distance. On return, the daily routine of work starts. Interviews have to be held while an attendant gives him massage. Letters have to be read, including those from American admirers and British correspondents, from eager applicants for monetary help and venomous carping detractors. The blank of every paper has to be saved with care to be used for future communications. Then there are jokes, harmless and witty, to enliven dull moments; little children to be played and laughed with; domestic problems and personal difficulties of disciples to be solved; sometimes the ways of snakes—a bottle-full of them—have to be studied and little discoveries like ‘gud’ from the toddy tree to be made and broadcast and, perhaps, most irritating of all even to him, the rivalries of irresponsible followers to be adjusted. In this welter of activities several India-wide organisations have to be guided. The work of leading Congressmen all over India has to be controlled, the problems of communal harmony and untouchability to be straightened, and so vast an organisation like the Congress to be supervised. British statesmen have to be dealt with at long range or through several intermediaries. The principle of non-violence has to be interpreted and applied to the fluctuating experience of daily life. The philosophy and

technique of *Satyagraha* are to be presented for the emancipation of the world. At the same time, the poise and detachment of a *yogi* has to be maintained by prayer and constant communion with God. And these things have to be done in failing energies and under erratic blood pressure in a little village, a few miles away from railway and telegraph.

In all these multifarious activities the one thing that forcefully strikes even a casual observer is that he is the Master of his time and energy. *My Experiments with Truth*—his autobiography—has recorded his ceaseless struggle for mastery over human weaknesses with which he was more than normally endowed. He has willed his body to perform its appointed task. He has created his own surroundings, and shaped the lives of those around him. He has forged the formidable organisations which struggle to liberate India.

The first trait in Gandhiji which even at first sight distinguishes him from all men is the perfection of each little act of his. His papers are arranged in unimpeachable order. His short loin cloth is worn with a fastidious care which would rouse the envy of a smartly dressed young man. His courtesy is incomparable. His chivalrous attention to women would leave the accomplished far behind. The shortest of his letters has a personal touch which binds the addressee to him. His political correspondence has force and dignity which trained diplomats may covet. His tone, manner and language on all occasions are fault-

lessly appropriate. The appropriateness, however, is not mechanical. It has the grace of spontaneity. It has a soulful reality, which one who has devoted sympathetic attention to the occasion alone can give. The words of the Gita 'Yoga is perfection in action' has come true in him.

During the last twenty years Gandhiji's perfection in action has achieved miracles. Congress has become a powerful organ of a great nation. Ancient *Khadi* has become modern fashion. Untouchability has been exploded. In Hindi, India has found a national language. Non-violence has become a potent factor in world politics. Battles have been fought and won with it against a mighty empire armed with tremendous resources. India has acquired a heroic national tradition. Three-fourths of it came to be governed by a steel frame of which Gandhiji was the final guide. The mighty Britisher baffled by his technique has more than once found it impossible to get along without him. India has become an all-world problem. His voice has become the voice of the world's conscience.

Even for a great man, these achievements are not meagre. But Gandhiji is not merely great. To find out what he is we must go beyond his achievements to his personality.

The words 'Truth' and 'Non-violence' have come to be associated with Gandhiji, and by this association he has come to be recognised as the modern prophet of the Moral World Order. He came to this godless age which scoffed at

morals. But at the start of life, he achieved faith in the Law of Moral Causation. He came to represent the Law, which transcends the shifting conventions and sordid conflicts of men and races. The moral codes of one age or a country had no appeal for him; the eternal Moral Order, which saints have taught and poets sing of, was what he wanted to live by and uphold. Moderns seeking the past in comparative studies, look upon morals as a matter of changing fashions. To him the Law is neither a theory nor a convention; not even a message from above; nor a categorical imperative.

This Law of Moral Causation, following the Indian Masters, he views under the broad aspects of the *Mahavratas* of Non-violence and Truth, Non-stealing, Non-waste and Non-possession. In these aspects the Law has to be followed irrespective of person, time or place. This pursuit may or may not lead to benefit in this world or the next; but they are part of a chain of cause and effect. These are Great Vows, the inseparable antecedents respectively of power and accomplishment, wealth and vigour and a true view of life's realisation. The Law is ineluctable like the law of gravitation. As the apple falls off the tree it is drawn to the earth, not away from it. Whosoever realises Truth, his work shall bear immediate fruit. Whosoever realises Non-violence, to him shall men come, shedding their hostility. Whosoever realises Non-stealing, shall attract wealth. Whosoever realises Non-waste, shall obtain vigour that fades not. Whosoever gives up

possessions, shall know the how and wherefore of his life. This is the Law of Cause and Effect as defined by Patanjali, accepted by Gandhiji, and established by the unvarying experience of ages.

What Vyasa and Patanjali once taught is being again taught to the modern world by Gandhiji. "What is Truth?" asked Pilate; and so did I with my notions of historical relativity when I first saw Gandhiji laying emphasis on it. Gandhiji's effort throughout his life has been to undergo the training necessary to be able to see Truth by struggling to live upon it in the varying conditions of life.

His *Experiments with Truth* is an epic of human efforts for restoring unity between thought, word and deed. He never lays down one policy for leaders and another for the masses. If he preaches a thing, he is the first to practise it. If possession is a sin, it is sin even in his wife to keep a few rupees with her, howsoever innocently. If the seeking of Viceregal help in the Rajkot episode smacks of violence, that fact has to be publicly announced and repented. If a pledge is made at the Round Table Conference that he will prevent the disruption of the Hindu community with his life, life has to be laid down for it. If Britons have to be told to give up violence, it has to be done whatever the consequences may be.

Truth, therefore, for which Gandhiji stands for is not consistency or correctness or

mere factual or logical accuracy. His whole life is a vindication of the principle that thought, word and deed welded in unity will alone lead to enduring creative efforts. It is a Law of Moral Causation as enunciated by Patanjali ; Whosoever realises Truth, his work shall bear immediate fruit. Accomplishment is only the visible counterpart of the unity of thought, speech and action.

That Truth is the inseverable oneness of word, thought and deed is hard to understand, harder still to follow. More often than not, we think one way, we talk the other, and act in the third. Every moment we are impelled by love for fame, position, wealth, conceit; we are driven by wrath, malice, spite; and the fabric of Truth falls to pieces as word, thought and deed fly in different directions. That is Untruth. But in the brief moments when these three become one, we realise God, which is Truth.

Truth, as thus understood by Gandhiji, has two far-reaching corollaries. First, that whosoever seeks to realise Truth shall be ready to back it with his life; second, that pursuit of Truth as thus viewed only makes individuality the keystone of a social fabric reared on the foundation of Moral Order.

Truth, as Gandhiji has realised in himself and as he teaches, is a charter for free souls. It is a re-assertion of the dignity of man; a revolt against the regimentation of modern life; against the passive subordination to the dogmas of the church, religious and political; against the despotic

unity of the collective impulse which the political and social theories of modern Europe has made fashionable. It is out of this conception of Truth that Gandhiji has forged the weapon of Satyagraha. Consecration of one's life to Truth as one sees it is the essence of freedom. To use the beautiful words of Roman Rolland: "A man's first duty is to be himself, to remain himself even at the cost of life."

Before Gandhiji this consecration of oneself to one's Truth was an individual effort. On rare occasions, under the urge of collective will, it became a social force, as among early Christian martyrs or the Rajputs of Mediaeval India. This consecration of one's life to truth is not possible without shedding all attachment, fear and wrath.

Human beings generally show great heroism under the stress of attachment or fear or malice or hatred. The whole technique of modern warfare is based upon rousing man to collective action under the urge of self-interest or fear of the enemy or hatred. During the periods of stress like world war I or the present war, statesmen set out deliberately to fabricate propaganda calculated to rouse all emotions which can be played upon by one or the other of these sentiments. Such propaganda by its very nature has to depend upon lies. The pattern of Truth for which Gandhiji stands is the negation of propaganda in which camouflage plays an important part; while camouflage is indispensable

to the blind regimentation of mind and body practised in Europe.

But Truth as the unity of thought, word and deed is not necessarily an ethical force. Great men of history who have spread carnage and ruin were not untrue to themselves. Alexander, Chengiz, Napoleon and Adolf Hitler worked for their own truth. But Gandhiji stands for his Truth, which is inseparable from Non-violence. Satyagraha is a product of Truth and Non-violence welded into one effective force. This fusion in Gandhiji is the result of the *Yogic* perception that Truth and Non-violence are mere shapes of the self-same Law. A ceaseless effort at this fusion distinguishes him from the heroes of history. He is the composite product of heroism and saintliness blended into a pattern which has no precedent.

His uncanny perception, his gift of evoking loyalty, his extra-ordinary capacity of organisation, would have made Gandhiji found an empire in any age, when empire-making as a career had been open to any man.

By its very nature, Satyagraha as conceived, practised and preached by him has to abjure the use of physical force. Gandhiji has tried to teach this to his disciples, but it would be absurd to assume that all those who follow him have developed his outlook. Mass action in which men of towering personality participate has a tendency to sacrifice individual Truth for corporate strength. The motive of attach-

ment, fear and wrath enter into such an organisation. But when a corporate effort at Satyagraha abjures the use of physical force it becomes a training ground for realising the compactness of thought, word and deed; and defiance of such corporate strength in search of one's Truth costs less than when that strength is backed by violence.

This prophet of the Moral World Order does not rest content with a sentimental attachment to love or non-violence. He has welded it with Truth to produce a form of Satyagraha. If I stand up for my truth and back it with my life, I must also impose upon my struggle the limitations of non-violence and abjure the use of brute force. Thus, the struggle assumes a new edge and a fresh meaning.

The implications of this new technique are many. In the first stage the forms of struggle which inflict violence upon the other side have to be given up; one has to content oneself with inviting suffering on oneself. This would immediately purge the mind of impulsive conduct, for suffering, deliberately invited, requires a stronger will than when suffering is courted under an impulse of attachment, fear or wrath. The result of such an effort is not the surrender of the other side under coercive might but only under an impressive urge created by sense of shame, sight of suffering, stirrings of the conscience, or often of public opinion rallying round the martyr and against

his persecutor. Though the results of this technique are achieved by slow degrees, the resultant bitterness of the struggle is ephemeral. But the last and the most important implication of this form is that the conditions of self-control and suffering imposed by this method, educate the person adopting it along the path of self-evolution more effectively than the method of violence.

The structure of Gandhiji's power, therefore, has to be based on tenacity which, while it abjures force, restricts itself to resistance by training himself to face all risks cheerfully. He does not invite martyrdom as a spectacular feat of self-immolation. It is a carefully planned and systematically executed life-long programme of surrendering everything which interferes with maintaining life at a high level of heroic tenacity to one's Truth. Throughout, he has transferred the emphasis from aggression by force to resistance by tenacity. He has transmuted suffering and hardship into a well-forged instrument of power. Attachment, fear and wrath were conquered by a slow process of training. Not that he does not become angry, does not love his country or those who love him, or that he takes no precaution against failures or disasters. But, by a long course of training in the practice of his creed, attachment, fear and anger in him have become only opportunities for self-introspection, for clear appreciation of issues and for resuming the correct moral position.

His life has been one long object lesson

in the use of this Satyagraha as a social force. Before he came, the penalties imposed by the British in India had unnamed terrors; he broke their edge by inviting them himself and training others to do so. By adopting higher forms of Non-violent resistance like fasts, temporary or unto death, he has attempted at forging a technique of immense possibilities.

This technique has not been accepted either in theory or in practice by weaker vessels who, believing in it theoretically, have not the strength to adopt it. But that does not take away its potency. By creating Non-violent Satyagraha as a social force he has presented to humanity a fresh, mighty weapon of resistance in its struggle for freedom and self-realisation. Before he came, there was no substitute to a war of violence nor a method known whereby a mass effort could be made without resort to force. With the instruments of destruction technically perfected and concentrated in the hands of a small world syndicate this new instrument as now tried for over 50 years will prove a great new source of strength to those who serve the cause of Freedom and Truth.

Gandhiji's Satyagraha as a social force is not the pacifism of the so-called pacifists, a pious wish, a faith devoid of passion. It is an activity resulting from an effective will to peace. It is a struggle demanding, in the hour of danger, the highest heroism. Those who are baffled by his attitude towards the War since September 1939

have missed this fundamental difference between the pacifist sentiment and the Gandhian Non-violence. This war came to him as a fiery ordeal. The World went war mad. His most devout followers lost their faith in the efficacy of Non-violence.

With our limited vision of Truth, we wanted and still want to participate in the war to win Indian freedom. We saw in his conduct a doctrinaire obstinacy. But with his faith in the rock of Non-violence he simply could not beat the war-drum. During a war like the present the whole world is given over to hatred. How could a man to whom *Ahinsa* was the will of God forsake Him?

Gandhiji has taken the great vows of *Brahmacharya*, Non-waste, Non-stealing and Non-possession, vows which, though inseparable aspects of the self-same law, have been found in practice more difficult to be observed than Truth and Non-violence. That is why Gandhiji has restricted his teachings of these aspects to a limited circle and its practice to a still smaller circle of devoted adherents. But in himself he has realised the power and greatness which the observance of the Great Vows yields.

Gandhiji, while he accepts the absolute nature of the Great Vows, is too devout a student of Sri Krishna's teachings to ignore them in the practical affairs of men. The universal appeal of the *Bhagavad Gita* is due to its teachings being based on the needs of man as he actually is. Truth is

absolute ; but is different to their respective *Swadharma*. Non-violence is absolute ; but on occasions, as the one which presented itself to Arjun, it is a mental attitude, not actual non-killing. And so with Non-waste, Non-stealing and Non-possession. That is why to superficial minds, Gandhiji's attitude appears to swing between the absolute position of Patanjali and the intensely human outlook of Sri Krishna.

Gandhiji objected to my advocacy of violent resistance in Hindu-Muslim riots and in Wars like the present, but he favoured killing irrepressible monkeys and the use of all forms of resistance by women against their abductors. Apparent inconsistency between the two attitudes only shows the immense difficulties which even highly evolved individuals find in teaching and enforcing the Law of Moral Causation in its entirety, in a world of men and women who neither understand nor believe in it. It takes nothing away from the greatness of such individuals or the unalterability of the Law. In a moral use of violence, according to *Bhagvad Gita*, attachment, fear and wrath have to be extracted from the mind and motive of the man who uses it ; in Satyagraha, as conceived by Gandhiji, in addition to the removal of attachment, fear and wrath from the outlook, a Satyagrahi has to refrain from inflicting violence on the other. In that difference lies the contribution which Gandhiji has made to the applicability of the Law to the affairs of men.

In this way conquering his weaknesses by pro-

gressive elimination of attachment, fear and wrath he has emerged as the apostle of the Moral World Order, and in his lifelong campaign of resistance he has been fighting everything which conflicts with this Order. By his flaming personality he has restored the faith of man in the moral purpose of human life, investing it with a dignity which elevates life above the brute's in which satisfaction of appetites by cunning or force is the only motive.

In the shifting habits of mankind, the Law of Moral Causation is the one unalterable force which supports the Moral Order. But the Masters, Vyasa, Christ, St. Augustine, Chaitanya, have all attested to a God whom they have known and felt and communed with. Hegel discovered the Law of Historical Relativism. Men, he tried to establish, cannot climb out of the historical environment in which they are placed. But men who know, in all ages and countries, have claimed that by stern endeavour it is possible to climb out of environment and meet Reality face to face.

In India, since the days of the *Upanishadas*, the masters have, by ceaseless effort and assiduous detachment from worldly things, risen above attachment, fear and wrath. As a result, the mind came to transcend direct and inferential knowledge, fancy and memory, and with vision undimmed it saw Truth as Reality which is entirely different from what seems to us and what we call Truth.

Ultimate Reality, as they have taught since

and as has been experienced by saints all over the world, is at once transcendent and immanent. God has created the world, and sustains it. But His kingdom is within us ; and could be realised by everyone who is prepared to lose his life in order to save it. St. Augustine and Dionyseus the Areopagete christianised this mystic doctrine and taught it to Europe.

But this Reality cannot be understood by intellectual operations, for they depend upon language, reason, fancy and memory and dreams which are the expression of human imperfection. And God cannot be measured in terms of such imperfections.

Like all great mystics who have known and felt Reality, Gandhiji has revolted against reason. He says " He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect if He ever does. God to be must rule the heart and transform it. Sense perceptions can be, often are, false and deceptive however real they may appear to us. Where there is realisation outside the senses it is infallible."

In pursuit of this Reality which is termed God, the Great Vows are no more than a first step at climbing out of historical environment and the sheaths of attachment, fear and wrath which keep out its vision. Ultimately it is only by the combined result of imagination, will and emotions, can He be seen. If men prefer death to self, the way is made through the wall of imperfection and God, which is Perfection, is realised. To the

extent to which a man so climbs out, does he become a Master.

Gandhiji's practice of the Great Vows is not an end but a means to contact Reality. To lose himself in all he thinks and feels and does, so that there should be nothing left but the instrument of God's will, has been, as with St. Augustine, the cherished ambition of his life.

He says : "We must ever fail to perceive Him through the senses, because he is beyond them. We can feel Him, if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music, which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can perceive or hear with our senses."

"Once I believed that God is Truth", he wrote once, "I now believe that Truth is God". Truth is God and Untruth a denial of Him. "God as Truth" he wrote, "has been for me a treasure beyond price. May He be so to every one of us."

But this faith in God is translated into fitness to commune with Him only when a man surrenders himself to God, and lives but to be His instrument.

Saith the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita :—

"Be My-Minded,  
Devoted to Me, worshipping Me  
In all humility, bowing unto Me.  
Then alone, Kaunteya,  
Will thou come unto Me."

"But who am I?", Gandhiji said, "I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen save the purely moral. If he holds me to be a sure instrument for the spread of Non-violence in place of the awful Violence now ruling the earth, He will give me the strength and show me the way. My greatest weapon is mute prayer. The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands. Nothing can happen but His will expressed in His eternal, changeless Law which is He."

He upholds Non-violence in place of the violence now ruling the earth. "God is a living presence to me", says he, "I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room. I may live without air and water but not without Him." "You may pluck out my eyes", says he again, "but that cannot kill me." You may chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my belief in God and I am dead."

In self-communion with God he observes his strength. "Whatever striking things I have done in life, I have not done prompted by reason but by instinct, I would say God."

But in the present world the needs of military efficiency and industrial expansion are merged in an inevitable urge. This leads to technological perfection, nationalism, war, totalitarianism. In such a world as of today the transmutation of human personality by surrender to God has become a lost art and an uninspiring message. Christ is no longer the Son of God; he is treated

as the mascot of a regiment. Men who have direct inferential knowledge of ultimate Reality are scoffed at, discarded, crushed.

Into this world dominated by what Aldous Huxley calls 'the false doctrine of totalitarian anthropocentrism and the pernicious ideas and practices of nationalistic pseudo-mysticism' has Gandhiji come. In an age when brute force is the rule of the day, he rules the hearts of men by an authority which is spiritual and moral. He has none of the sanctions of position, power, or wealth; his sanctions proceed from his nearness to God.

His mind is infused with Him; his faith is anchored on what he feels to be His will. Friend of all, full of compassion, rid of 'I' and 'Mine'; poised alike in pain and pleasure, he lives and moves and has his being only as His instrument. To us men of no such experience it is difficult to believe what to him is the Reality in which he subsists and through which his being is nourished and impregnated with eternal freshness.

And that makes him the Master.

## CHAPTER II

# The Yeravda Pact

GENTLEMEN,

I make no apology for speaking on this old subject today. In some moments of history is compressed the progress of centuries. India lived through such moments in September 1932, when Mahatma Gandhi undertook his 'Epic Fast', when the Yeravda Pact was made and the untouchability campaign was decided upon by the Conference of Hindus in Bombay. All those happenings—which in short I describe as the Yeravda Pact—thrill me even today. This Pact, to my mind, is the greatest event in the history of Modern India, when Hinduism was purified, the one obstacle to triumphant Indian nationalism was removed, and the wrongs of centuries were righted.

We cannot realise the magnitude of the Yeravda Pact and its implications unless we try to understand what untouchability stands for in the social structure of India. We live and move and have our being in this structure and, consequently have lost the capacity of appraising it at its value. Behind this structure, of which the caste system in general and untouchability in particular are

the prime features, lies an ideology of hereditary social inequality. This ideology denies to millions of human beings the status of men. It deprives them of the right to move freely, to associate on equal terms with others, to worship the same gods, to be given a bare chance of life which we would be ashamed to deny even to a dog. It is based on the negation of social justice. It is the reverse of humanity. It has justified the greatest crime which man has committed against his brother. Do we not shudder when we see revealed in the pages of *Harijan* the shocking conditions in which we have permitted human beings to live in the name of religion and social purity ?

Let us be frank about it. An ideology which permitted such a division between men is the outcome of barbarous times. In other times and different conditions, the Hindu social structure came to be based on it. Then, nationalism was unknown and freedom was undiscovered. Men were ground together in castes according to the functions they performed, and the lawgivers took things as they were and gave society a national unity under the name of "*catura*". The individual had no place in the scheme. Human personality had no intrinsic value.

But a new world has come into existence. Human society is being re-formed on the basis of the individual. Man is no longer the means to an end, but an end in himself. We fight for social justice, for a just distribution of wealth, for a popular basis for political power. We want

India to grow strong as a nation. Indians must develop a collective will inspired by the nation-idea. Caste and communal consciousness must disappear. The social structure based on hereditary superiority and social injustice must be reshaped. Men, as equals, must will to be a nation. And how can we hope to be a nation, great and strong, if we tolerate in our midst a sub-nation of submerged human beings to whom the elementary rights of life are denied? Social injustice and nationhood never can stand together. Whoever sides with untouchability is an enemy of the nation. He is not of this age. Verily does he belong to the dark ages which were denied the heritage of Rousseau, Abraham Lincoln and Mazzini.

But this is not all. The social injustice on which untouchability is based is not only a crime against the nation, but it is a sin against the spirit of Hinduism. Here we join issue with our friends the Sanatanists. Its spirit is not the same as its social structure based on social inequality and supported by the arrogance of the higher classes. Hinduism, as I understand it, is not a narrow and bigoted creed; it is built on purer and nobler foundations. Its spirit is not enshrined in the later-day *Shastras*, but in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagvad Gita*. Its message of idealism, as against the materialism of a sordid world, is the only thing which has made it immortal. It proclaims, as no other religion or philosophy does, the divine right of man to rise by self-discipline to the dignity of godhood. It teaches love

even for the dumb and the low. The Hinduism which I have learnt from the scriptures is a world-culture, which knows no racial prejudices and no geographical limitations. If Hinduism is the selfish, arrogant creed which the Sanatanists make of it, if Hinduism can only be preserved by perpetuating untouchability, if to deny the sight of gods to man is an injunction of its scriptures, then Hinduism has no right to exist. Then the *Shastras* must be consigned to flames. A religion which seeks to flourish on the inequality of men is a negation of all that is noble, pure and holy.

The events and forces which culminated in the Yeravda Pact have ushered in a new age for Hindu society, for Hinduism, and for the nation. The greatest Indian who ever lived passed through a fiery ordeal in order that a new era may begin. The Pact introduced equality in the political life of the Hindus. The Hindu community represented to the Bombay Conference solemnly pledged itself to the view that no one should be regarded as untouchable by reason of his birth. And Mahatma Gandhi's voice heralds in distant villages the advent of social justice and religious purity. The ideology of the dark ages is dead and buried, and India stands purged of its deadliest sin.

I admit that we have yet to do many things before this process can be completed. The Sanatanists will protest day and night. The Government in its present mood, will perhaps impose as many obstacles as it can to the passage of the

Bills relating to untouchability. One would have thought that they were so innocent and so necessary that a civilised people and a civilised government would have received them with open arms. But things are different in India. And I am confident that neither resistance nor obstruction will shake the determination of the progressive Hindus to see that the Bills are placed on the Statute Book. I am also confident that the national forces will gain tremendous momentum as years go by. The ideology which sustained untouchability is gone; and untouchability must disappear. The Hindus of the new age will never tolerate the social structure which we shamelessly maintained before.

Visualise for a moment the result of these activities a few years hence. With untouchability gone, four or five crores of human beings would have been elevated to the full stature of manhood. National evolution would have been easy and swift, and a powerful and united India would stand before the world in the full dignity of a modern nation.

## CHAPTER III

# Thus Spake The Prophet

IT did not happen centuries ago. It happened on Sunday, September 15th. 1940, to be precise at 3-40 P.M.

It was not on the heights of Senai. Nor was it under the shade of the Bodhi tree. It was in the prosaic hall of the Cotton Exchange at Sewri, that he spake.

The Prophet of Non-violence, in slow but weighty accents of one having authority, raised his voice against the barbarism which has spread over Europe today.

Gandhiji's sympathy was for Britain, as it was when the war broke out. He did not want to embarrass Britain. He could not contemplate the destruction of St. Paul's without a shudder. But he could not hate Germany or Italy. Europe, he felt, had lost its balance of mind. It was seeking meaningless self-destruction dragging the world with it.

Sternly Gandhiji asked India and the world to pause, to think, and to set its face against the violent-minded fury which was sweeping the

earth. India should not, ought not, to think in terms of political rights, for, who in these days can give them or secure them?

He reproved us all; those of us who wanted to participate in the war after obtaining an effective voice for the Congress in its conduct; those of us who wanted to embarrass Britain by mass Civil Disobedience out of resentment at the Vice-regal declaration; those of us who desired to create embarrassing little struggles in the interest of their special brand of 'isms'; and those who, though intellectually convinced of the efficacy of non-violence, could not transmute their conviction into a living faith. He reproved us all, but without a word. He made us lift our eyes to the moral grandeur of Non-violence and conscious of our littleness. We accepted the silent reproof.

"The prophet thus spake unto his people and to the peoples of the earth :

"Let him, who wishes, seek violence. But let not those who yearn for peace on earth and goodwill unto men be coerced into silence.

"Freedom of non-violent speech is the attribute of the divine in man. The right to preach non-violence is inalienable; it is Life, more so when violence, which is Death, consumes the world. In combating all attempts to stifle this freedom and this right, lies men's redemption. Silence, at such times, is sin."

We heard him speak with bated breath.

It would be untruth to say that all of us, who are of earth earthy, were convinced that he had a Message; that being born in his times ours was to do, and if need be, to die.

The architects of the present war have been prophets of Death. They have changed the face of human society; made it inhuman, irreligious. Nations have been aligned into separate and hostile camps to be destroyed, to be crushed or transplanted. Their 'Revolution' for improving the lot of man had chained him to the chariot-wheel of destruction. "You shall love peace as a means to new wars—and the short peace more than the long", was preached by their arch-prophet, Nietzsche.

Theirs has been a challenge to the Moral Order of the Universe. To them, in effect, thus spake the Prophet of Non-violence :

"I came that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly."

With this message, he now seeks an interview with the Satrap of the greatest 'Christian power on earth.

The Viceroy may welcome it. Perhaps, he may find in it an insidious form of embarrassment in his present pursuits.

No man will have been presented with such a choice before.

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If he welcomes the message, the world may witness the dawn of a new era, if not, perhaps another Calvary.

## CHAPTER IV

# Mahayana Gandhism

IT is difficult to speak of the international situation as it stands, for the exigencies of war make the truth inaccessible. But we can trace the forces which have led to the war, and the forces as they will be arrayed after it.

One of the greatest forces in human evolution is the group idea. That the group is all important, that the individual is but its constituent and instrument, is an idea which has led humanity to evolve increasingly larger and more compact groups.

In Europe, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the group idea expressed itself through the concept of the sovereignty of kings. This sovereignty was unfettered by any obligations. It found in the king a living instrument of expression. It subordinated morality to the position of its handmaid. The individual was a subject, a means to secure the strength of sovereignty, not an end in himself.

The sovereignty of kings passed to the State, when kingly power came to be vested in the Parliament in England. The nation-state, thus

became an instrument of coercion to its subjects and a source of danger to other nation-states. Sovereignty implied the power to mould the individual and crush him if necessary. It also implied a denial of any control in its dealings with other sovereigns. Human personality and the supremacy of the Moral Order became words which sanctimonious statesmen could use for exploiting the moral instincts of the men whom they wanted to govern.

The rulers of Britain, for two hundred years and more, exploited the weaker peoples of the earth to enrich their little island, but with characteristic tact they blunted the edge of their internal struggles by an allegiance to human freedom, by which however, they only meant the freedom of their own equals in their own land.

But the idea of national sovereignty dominated Europe. It displaced the power of the Church which was based on the assumption that a universal moral order, which it represented, was the basis of a supra-Statal law. Hegel, the great German philosopher, made of the State-idea a super-arching entity—like *Virata Purusha* distinct from the individuals constituting it and entitled to their ungrudging loyalty. The nation-State was thus conceived as an entity existing by itself and invested with superhuman attributes.

The head of the nation-state was both its representative and its visible embodiment. Thus came about the apotheosis of the group idea, which found its apostle in Hegel, its technician

in Marx, its high priests in Mazzini, Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler. The individual was but an insignificant tentacle of this mighty octopus, with no inalienable rights, no personality and no independent life of his own. With the privilege of using unrestricted force, the nation-State utilised gunpowder and diverse other instruments of destruction against individuals and rivals, till it believed itself omnipotent in theory, and in practice became a danger to human progress. And when man learnt to fly, it placed a facility in the hands of the State which made it a vulture of devastating rapacity.

From the earliest days, the Hindu thinkers found in man the divine spark, the *atma*, which to him was a source of power and freedom; which, for him, was the source of dignity. The Greek idea of human personality was another aspect of the same spark. When Jesus Christ vindicated his right to be the son of Man against the power of Rome and the wrath of Israel, representing respectively the political and social groups of his day, he secured the triumph of the human personality over the group forces of the day. Through Christianity, this idea fought the idea of national sovereignty, but failed to achieve a triumph except for some time in France, England and the U.S.A.

During World War I, Kaiser represented the All-High State-idea. In order to win the war, France and England secured Wilson's sympathy, who, in freedom-loving U.S.A. had worshipped the doctrine of human personality. The Allies who

won the war in the name of democracy, betrayed it in the hour of victory. Infatuated with the idea of the nation-state, they put up small dummy States all over the world draped in national sovereignty, but really pulled by the wires they held.

Lenin improved upon the Marxian technique and evolved totalitarian State, controlled by the party, a soulless machine which flourished by consuming the human dignity of the individuals who formed part of it. Mussolini borrowed the model of Lenin, but improved upon it. The national sovereignty was found in the party, and was to be exercised through the Duce. The latter was the All-Highest, for he was the State, more effectively than what Louis XIV thought he was.

For a time France and England pretended to control the irresponsibility of national sovereignties through the League of Nations. But being the two most powerful nation-states of the world, they were more anxious to retain their own sovereignty rather than try to regulate it. Both fell out. Britain helped Hitler to power as her big stick to beat Russia and France with. Hitler copied Mussolini's model; created the All-High Nation-state, with himself as its only representative; and became a big stick indeed, not only to beat France and Russia with, but even Britain herself.

In the meantime human personality languished and withered under the shadow of totalitarianism. Moral Order in Europe became the creed of pious ladies and simple-minded persons. Armaments

were piled up. World War II commenced. We have now a war between two international combines, one the Anglo-Saxon, the other the Axis. Let us not deceive ourselves. We come in nowhere except as bondsmen. The Anglo-Saxon combine, if it wins, will create an international structure which will disarm the rest of the world and enforce its rule upon it. The world would be straightened out for its domination. If the war goes the other way, an Axis combine will deal similarly with the world. Either way national sovereignty is dead.

We know where we stand. Even Dominion Status, as we know from the last 25 years' bitter experience, is a turnip dangled only to force the pace of the donkey. In this war, our duty is to serve Britain, not to share power. Streit, the American author, who once in theory included India as one of the constituents of a world union of democratic nations, now only wants a Union of White Nations. The Atlantic Charter is not to apply to us. India will remain as she was, a dependency of coloured subjects. India will not be the only weak nation. All people outside the victorious combine will share the same fate.

At the end of World War II, the successful international combine, equipped with irresistible military power, will hold all weak nations within its grasp. There would be no more wars because the combine will have the monopoly of the instruments of mass destruction. The mem-

bers of the combine cannot fall out with one another because they will be busy dividing the spoils of a war-weary world between them and the weaker nations will have no mechanical strength to fight them. Human personality will be discredited, for giving it importance would mean raising the unarmed nations to the level of the armed ones.

Even now as the radio blares out the war news hour after hour, making day and night hideous, thoughtful men even in the West are searching a way out of this stifling grip of group domination. Prof. Corell in his *Man the Unknown* has boldly asserted that the whole conception of the good life and consequently the organisation of society have gone astray since the Renaissance which, we had been taught so far, was the last word in human perfection. Mr. Mumford, an American author of repute, in his *Faith For Living* emphasises that forgetfulness of the durable ideals of life, which in the past kept humanity going in its most anguished and shattered moments, has helped to bring about the present catastrophe. Material organisation, he asserts, is no substitute for moral order. Reason is no alternative to coercion. The alternative to coercion, according to him, is what the religious call Conversion, Salvation or Grace. But, states the author, pre-conception must begin with the individual if it is to end in a better society—a belated tribute to the place of human personality in the scheme of things. Mr. Stuart in his *Personal Religion and The Future of Europe* also emphasises non-material issues of reconstruction after the war.

The author finds an organic relation between the immoral society and the irreligious individual. According to him moral authority and power is the chief motive force of every system of government and every form of public policy. Civilised men and women will, he believes, support any public policy which seems morally right. The eminent political thinker, Dr. Delisle Burns, in his pamphlet *After War—Peace* Emphasises that spiritual and moral development is an essential pre-requisite of any new order. In the Christianised tradition he finds great moral ideas which must inspire men and what their reason can apprehend. Francis Williams in his *Democracy's Last Battle* believes it to be the tragedy of our time that democracy has been caught in a web of materialism.

But all this advocacy of reverting to a belief in the moral order and a respect for the human personality will be pure theory unless effective means are placed at the disposal of humanity to struggle against organised forces of violence.

Is then, therefore, no hope for the human personality? Will any struggle for maintaining the dignity of human personality and human freedom be at an end? This cannot be, for if that were so, human beings would descend to the level of dumb driven cattle.

If we analyse the source of power, it will be easy to see that this will not happen. The ultimate source of power is the strength of the human spirit, not the strength of the instrument which it

wields. The will to resist is the source of all strength, and that will is an attribute of human personality. When the instruments of violence are concentrated in the hands of one combine, the human beings against whom that force is used will combine their wills in a supreme effort of resistance, though after this war the world outside the victorious combine, will be deprived of the use of violence.

When an unarmed man is to face an armed man his only chance is his capacity to resist with the force of spirit.

The Gandhian logic is unanswerable. Suppose an armed man wants to convert me to his views and I refuse to be converted. He threatens my life. I still refuse to yield. He cuts my throat. I die without being converted. In this struggle who is the victor? And who the vanquished? The victor is not the armed assailant. I am the victor, for the armed assailant failed to convert me.

In the conditions which will emerge after the war, the instruments of violence in the hands of the weaker nations and the defenders of the human personality will be infinitely less powerful than those which the victorious combine can wield. They will have to be supplemented by what may be termed "non-violent" instruments of resistance. Gandhiji has presented the world with such instruments in the shape of non-cooperation, boycott, invited penalties, self-immolation, and mobilisation

of the moral conscience of the people by inviting suffering on a large scale.

Each one of these methods was known to individuals in the past and was spontaneously used by groups of men for non-violent resistance. These activities were based on coordinated, individual, non-violent efforts. The wife resisted the unreasonable husband by refusing to cook for him. The early Christians resisted by self-invited martyrdom and triumphed over the Roman Empire. The Mahajans in medieval India resisted unrestricted kingly power by closing their shops. The Brahmins in Benares fasted to resist an illegal tax imposed by the East India Company. Hindu castes enforced their sanctions by a social boycott which sometimes was more terrible in its effects than the tortures inflicted by the Inquisition. Guru Teg Bahadur sought self-immolation to resist the fanatic zeal of Aurangzeb to convert the Sikhs to Islam. The Rajput women in medieval India flung themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands in order to escape the lust of alien invaders. Eighty thousand souls at Bardoli shook the foundation of British power.

The instruments of non-violent resistance, therefore, have added vastly to the armoury of resistance so valuable to humanity. These will be the instruments by which the weaker nations of the future will vindicate the dignity and honour of the human personality. By them alone will an individual retain his freedom in the future.

But I must guard against being misunderstood. Faith in non-violence—*Ahinsa*—no doubt stands as a fundamental aspect of the law of Moral Causation. But my purpose, for the moment, is only to study non-violent resistance in its worldly aspect, as a technique of corporate resistance. Examined in this way, certain considerations stand out.

First : Non-violent resistance, while it abjures the use of force which inflicts physical injury, to be effective, must exert coercion—economic, social, emotional or moral.

Second : For ordinary men, whose spiritual strength is limited, non-violent resistance can only be an additional medium through which resistance can be offered. The armoury of resistance, if available or inevitable, could not be forsworn except under exceptional circumstances.

Third : As awakening the moral conscience is a form of moral resistance, giving up any forum for ventilating one's opinions—except when abstention is the chosen form of resistance itself—weakens its force; and in this view there is no inherent antagonism between parliamentarianism *i. e.* indirect action and direct action.

Fourth : The adoption of non-violent resistance to be effective must not sink into non-resistance on account of either incapacity or unwillingness; but insistence on absolute non-violence often leads to that result.

Fifth : Non-violent resistance requires greater courage and tenacity than violent resistance,

which more often than not is the result of impulse.

Sixth : In its individual form, non-violent resistance may take the form of love or be inspired by it; in its corporate form it does not; but the suffering of the living or the martyrdom of the inoffensive stirs the moral conscience much more intensely than the short-lived sufferings of violent combatants.

Seventh : In the present initial stage at which the technique of non-violent resistance, rests, it cannot deal effectively with organised violence, unless the cause is not only just but is felt to be obviously so by those who use violence.

Eighth : In times, when wars are not on, non-violent resistance has greater chances of being effective if the fight is uncompromising and disciplined.

These considerations may not perhaps conform to what Gandhiji has said about Satyagraha. But the same could be said of *Mahayana* (Big Cart) Buddhism. Buddha would have disapproved of many of its tenets; so would the *Hinayana* (Small Cart) Buddhists sneer at it. But *Mahayana* Buddhism was as effective a Church as any other for the ordinary man. Gandhism, like Buddhism, to be accepted by the world must assume the shape of *Mahayana* Gandhism which the ordinary man can accept in daily life.

We of the helpless nations, therefore, are not helpless as we imagine. We will have to take stock

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of instruments available to us in order to secure the redemption of the weaker groups and the freedom of the human personality. We must, therefore, look forward to the hopeful days when the human personality will be saved by a world-wide resistance carried on by individuals freely combined in order to fight the octopus of the Almighty Group, for that is what totalitarianism stands for.

## CHAPTER IV

# Gandhiji & Gujarati Literature.

THE present period (in Gujarati literature) commences with the beginning of the European war in 1914. In these twenty years, Gujarat has been transformed from a small province of India into the home of a heroic people, who, leading the movement for Indian freedom, occupy an outstanding position in the world. Two great influences brought about this miracle: The world situation and Mahatma Gandhi. Interacting, they have changed values in every sphere of life including literature and culture.

### I

The Great European war had the effect of enriching the Gujaratis all over the country. Their concerns in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Karachi, Calcutta, Burma and Africa attained an unprecedented prosperity, and gave them a new sense of power and importance. They also realized, as never before, the intimate relation between political freedom and economic progress. And when, in 1915, Mrs. Besant began to agitate for Home Rule for India, they were ready to respond to her call. A band of young Gujaratis in

Bombay stormed the Presidency Association, the stronghold of Sir Pherozshaw Mehta; started an English weekly, *Young India*; Organised the Bombay branch of the Home Rule League with Mahomadali Jinnah as the president; and carried on an intensive agitation in Bombay and Gujarata. Within a short time, the Gujaratis became politically alert, and the Bombay branch came to dominate the inner councils of the Indian National Congress.

The entry of the U. S. A. in the War, and the great services rendered by India to Great Britain forced the British Government to announce, on August 20, 1947, a policy which had for its object "the progressive realization of responsible government in India". The avowed objects of the War and the energy of the late Mr. Edwin Montague, the then Secretary of State for India, in implementing the policy raised high hopes among politically minded Indians. But they were dashed to the ground when, the War over, Great Britain busied herself with strengthening her hold over India. In 1919 the fateful Rowlatt Acts were passed. They were received by the indignant country as a breach of faith. Thwarted hopes soon led to universal resentment.

## II

In 1914 Mahatma Gandhi, (born 1869) with the record of a victorious struggle in South Africa, returned to India. His quaint approach to life and politics and his opposition to political agitation

during the war made him unpopular at first. But he made Ahmedabad his headquarters, collected a small devoted band of workers round him, and began to popularise the cult of the charkha and Satyagraha. Having won his first victory in Bihar in 1917, he won another the next year in Gujarat in the Kaira Satyagraha. The next year, he was at the head of the Home Rule League and the editor of the *Young India* and the Gujarati *Navajivana*.

England's mistake in passing the Rowlatt Acts was Mahatma Gandhi's opportunity. His napoleonic achievements in the field of Indian politics between 1919 and 1922 left him the supreme figure in Indian life and politics. Incidentally, he organised some villages, intensified the political consciousness of the people in Gujarat, and consolidated the partnership in politics between the Gujarati politician, business man and peasant. He also founded the Gujarat Vidyapitha at Ahmedabad, and the scholars who joined it in the beginning stimulated the intellectual life of that city. Gujaratis, all over the world, felt proud of so great a man and backed all his activities. Political ambition and work became the dominant passion of their life.

In March, 1922, the Mahatma was convicted of sedition, and sentenced to six year's imprisonment; but owing to his uncertain health, was released in 1924. A section of Congressmen had, in the meantime, decided to participate in the new legislatures. And though he had the confidence

of the majority party in the Congress, he let the minority have its own way. The majority, under his direction, lent themselves to constructive work, the spread of the charkha, the removal of the drink evil and untouchability, and the organisation of the villages. The last activity, in his hands, meant an intensive organisation of the masses through an educative propaganda by devoted workers trained in his methods and living in the midst of their flock.

In 1927, when rain and flood devastated many parts of the province, the organisation which he had so built up, ably assisted the Government in carrying relief to the distressed. In 1928 it enforced the surrender of Government on a question of land revenue by leading mass Satyagraha in the Bardoli Taluka. The solid support given to this campaign by the Gujaratis from all parts of the country, attested to their organised strength. Bardoli involved a still greater moral triumph. The solidarity, heroism and sacrifice of eighty thousand souls was a unique phenomenon in Indian history. Bardoli has been the Thermopylae of Satyagraha, and has few parallels in the history of the world, ancient or modern.

Bardoli gave the political weapons of Mahatma Gandhi a fresh edge, and to political India a new message of hope. In the Simon Commission, England gave him one more chance to try the efficacy of the weapon. The Mahatma's historic march to Dandi on the 12th

March 1930 stirred Gujarata to depths unknown before. His path was one track of living flame across the province. A dazzling phenomenon of a spontaneous outbreak of heroism followed. The Gujaratis all over the world responded, and none so energetically as those in Bombay. Bombay justified its boast of being *urbs prima Indis*, and for the moment aspired to rank with cities which have changed the destinies of nations. From everywhere the Gujaratis offered at the altar of Satyagraha men, women and children, wealth and lands, prospects and profits. In 1931 the Gandhi-Irwin truce was signed and the Mahatma went to represent the Indian nation at the second sessions of the Indian Round Table Conference. About the end of 1931 the Mahatma returned to India and, soon afterwards, Government introduced the ordinance regime. Government arrested him on the 4th of January 1932 and a strenuous struggle began between the Congress and the Government of India. Locked up in the Yeravda Jail and single-handed, he then began to combat tremendous forces by sheer force of spiritual strength. On the 20th of September 1932 he went on "his fast unto death" in order to undo the wrong which the British Premier had inflicted upon the Hindu community by cutting it into two. It moved India and many parts of the world to its innermost depths; the conscience of the Hindu community was awakened; and the British Premier was compelled to revise his award so as to leave the Hindu community one and undivided. The Yeravda

pact is, perhaps, the greatest event in the history of Modern India.

Thereafter, the Mahatma organised from jail a campaign to remove untouchability. In May 1933 he held communion with God and went on a Self-purificatory fast of twenty-one days. He had to be released in consequence, but, on his decision to resume individual Civil Disobedience, Government arrested him again on 1st of August, and refused to give him the permission he had enjoyed during his last imprisonment to carry on the Harijan campaign unrestricted in jail. He went on a fast again and was released. Pursuant to his vow, he then conducted a whirlwind campaign throughout the country for the removal of untouchability; and within so short a time as one year defied time and space and the demands of health, to carry to the most remote villages, his message of hope to the socially submerged. History knows of a Buddha preaching his gospel of Nirvana far and wide in the course of a long life, and a Peter the Hermit delivering his fiery message of the Crusades across Europe; but this generation has seen with its eyes what centuries have found it difficult to imagine; a prophet in one year by his quickening inspiration stimulating the conscience of so vast and slow-moving a society and re-shaping the life of millions. On the 28th October 1934, he retired from the Congress amidst the regrets of an adoring nation.

He is no longer of the earth; he is a Vedic Rishi.

## III

These influences have led to wonderful results. The Gujaratis have thrown off the fetters riveted by political slavery, social isolation and religious bigotry. They have developed a sense of power, freedom and self-respect. They no longer suffer from an inferiority complex. Fatalism, born of helplessness, oppresses them no longer. Their social and religious outlook has become elastic enough to grapple with all the complex situations of modern existence. Caste has become but an incident of life, and does not weigh them down, stifling energy and change.

Gujarati women no longer stand dumb, perplexed and helpless. They have stormed the citadels of power, and struggled with burly sergeants in defence of the national flag. They have suffered for freedom, and, through picketing and processions, through the terrors of the jail and the lathi charge, won their equality with men. They have retained their delicacy, purity, and grace, and yet, are as free as women in many so-called advanced countries in the world.

The Gujaratis, with business habits extending over centuries, have always been calculating, but the arithmetic of their life has become very comprehensive. They have found in wealth an instrument of tremendous power in modern life—a sword in war, in peace a ploughshare. They have realised its inter-dependence with political power, and placed theirs at the service of the nation. At the same time, they have been shaped

into a compact race; an organic whole with a strong collective will. More, they have forgotten the sorrows of six centuries and acquired a background of heroic traditions. Sabaramati and Bardoli, Borsad and Ras, the squares and roads of Bombay have been hallowed by struggle and sacrifice. An elemental note of heroism has come into their life and history.

And thus, like unto the Prophet of Israel, has Mahatma Gandhi led his people out of bondage.

#### IV

Mahatma Gandhi's works in Gujarati may be classified under three heads: (i) the articles in *Navajivana*; (ii) *Atmakatha*, Autobiography; (iii) *Dakshina Africana Satyagrahane Itihasa*; (iv) *Arogya Vise Samanya Jnana* (v) and *Patro*, letters, only some of which have been published so far. Since he became the editor of the weekly *Navajivana* till it stopped in 1932, week after week except when in jail, he has addressed to the Gujaratis his views and theories, his sermons, confidences, and battle-cries. Few other newspapers in the world have had a similar popularity and influence in their area of circulation as this small, unostentatious sheet which never screamed a headline and never published an advertisement. With many, it replaced the novel and the Purana in interest. A single copy of this weekly has often brought to a distant hamlet its only journal and gospel of life.

Mahatma Gandhi has given to Gujarat prose a new sense of power. His vocabulary has been

drawn from many sources. His style, though sometimes loosely woven in construction, is direct, clear and easily comprehensible, the result of precise thinking and an incessant effort to avoid the devious by-paths of rhetoric and sophistry. An unerring sense of proportion keeps both expression and imagination under judicious restraint. The literary element is always subordinated to the author's prime motive, which is to touch the living chord in the reader's heart and vivify him into action. Sometimes, and particularly in *Atmakatha*, the style carries itself with grace. The charms are disposed of well and wisely, and become part of the general effect, not the main source of it. His thunder acquires a severe majesty, his appeal its persuasiveness, his confession its poignancy, as much by a proper use of the proper word as by his personality. Sometimes, he is slyly humorous or playful. But he prefers monotony of expression to a varied literary effect. With him, beauty of expression, has to be a humble housemaid to Truth. And the reader invariably falls under the spell of "the bare, sheer, penetrating power of every line" of his, which, under the stress of some great emotion, attains biblical strength.

## V

The articles published in Navajivana deal with almost every serious aspect of human conduct. They are not leaders in the journalistic sense, but in their technique, have a tendency to approach a variety of forms, from an informal chat to an address. Every one of them is sober. Imagina-

tion is always curbed by a stern adherence to hard facts, marshalled with fairness. Restraint and sincerity invest every line with moral dignity, making any other view look morally imperfect. These articles establish a living contact with the reader. They draw a picture when necessary, but only in subdued tones. Long or short, every one of them presents the well-defined outline of a living vision which the author alone can see and materialise. It is this feature which gives to the smallest note in Navajivana its compelling power. Many of his articles have been rendered into English, and published in *Young India* or in book-form; and even in their English version they give a fairly correct idea of their literary value.

He responds to nature but not with the abandon of an artist. While on the Brahmaputra he wrote :

The steamer is gliding on the river. We are all sitting on the deck. The river looks wide as the sea. We can see the banks, far away on either side; the distance between the two may be two miles or a little over. The voyage will take about fifteen days. Sublime peace has descended on the river. The moon, hidden behind the clouds, spreads a soft light over the waters. The propellers, even as they cut their way through the water, hum sweetly. Except for this hum, peace is over everything and everywhere. I alone have no peace of mind. The steamer is not mine, the river is not mine. I travel in the steamer through the courtesy of the power of which I am tired, which has made India decrepit, lustreless, poor.

Few passages in literature possess the intensity and grace of the moving appeal which he issued to Gujarata in 1922.

Let him who wants, come. Let him who can, join the fray. Everyone is invited, but the hungry alone shall come to the feast. Others, even if they come, will only be sorry. He who has no hunger, will not relish even a dry crust of bread. Likewise, those who understand non-cooperation can alone stand by it. He who understands finds things easy. For those who do not, everything is difficult. What is the use of a mirror to the blind ?

The times are difficult. Let us not take a thoughtless step, lest we may rue it... Civil disobedience of laws ! We are no longer ignorant of it. Jail is its inevitable destination. And we can court it. Many have gone there, undergone its hardships, and returned. Why can we not do as much ? It is not so difficult. But—?

But if martial law is declared ? If Gurkhas come ? If Tommy Atkins comes ? Suppose they bayonet us, shoot us, make us crawl ? They are welcome. Let them come. But if we are asked to crawl ? Then too, we must be ready to die rather than crawl. We shall then only die by the bayonet instead of the plague. We are not likely to run away, if we are fired on; we have now acquired so much strength that we will receive the bullets on our chests, like playthings. We shall convert the Gurkhas into our brothers. If not, what happiness is greater than dying at the hands of a brother ? Even as we say this, we feel proud.

But if—

I am confident this time that timid Gujarata will show its mettle. But as I write, my pen is heavy. Whenever did Gujarata hear gunshots ? When did it see rivers of blood flowing ? Will Gujarata withstand shots fired like crackers ? Heads broken like earthen pots ? If Gujarata sees others' heads broken, it will feel glorious. When it sees its own head broken, it will be immortal. Why do you want training ?

Confidence ? You will never acquire confidence by a Congress resolution. It is God who helps the weak. God alone gives courage. Whom Rama protects, none can injure. He has given us the body. Let Him, if he wants, take it away. Even if you so desire you cannot treasure up this body. Like money, it has to be spent in noble acts. What is a nobler occasion for giving up life than when you are combating this atrocity? Whoever believes thus sincerely, will receive bullets with his bare chest, his face smiling.

The literary art is made use of in every one of these sentences with consummate success, and yet the principal object of inspiring the reader to action is never lost sight of.

Our difficulties are as great as the Himalayas. But great though our difficulties are none the less great are the remedies at our disposal. We are descended from an ancient race. We have witnessed the decline of the civilizations of Rome, Greece and Egypt. Our civilization had, like the sea, its ebb and tide; but like the sea it has continued changeless. We have in the country all necessary equipments to make life self-contained. It has high mountains and rivers. It has an abundance of natural beauty. Its sons have left us a legacy of glorious exploits. This land is the storehouse of ascetic ideals. Here, all religions live side by side. Here alone, all Gods command veneration. With such advantages, if we cannot teach the world the lessons of peace by some extraordinary deed, if we cannot win the English by our pacific activities we will have disgraced our inheritance. Our connection with the English, then, would have been wasted. The English are enterprising. They are religious. They have self-confidence. They are a race of heroes. They work for freedom. But the spirit of commerce dominates them. They have not always thought of the moral value of the means employed by them to acquire

wealth. They worship modern civilization. They have forgotten ancient ideals. We need not copy them. If we do not forget what is ours, if we love our own culture, if we have firm faith in its pre-eminence, we will turn our relations with them to good use and render it beneficial to them as well as to the world.

## VI

Mahatma Gandhi's *Atmakatha*, Autobiography, or as it is called, "My Experiments with Truth", is a recognised masterpiece in the autobiographical literature of the world. Any summary of its contents here is unnecessary as the work has, ere now, been translated into many languages. The overshadowing personality and achievements of the author render a literary estimate of the work rather difficult. It is a narrative of his struggles to introduce Truth as a dominant principle of life. Its language, though monotonous at times, presents Gujarati in one of its best forms; a racy vehicle for compact literary expression. A perfect sense of proportion characterises every line. The story is told with great skill and energy. All excrescences have been cut out; every incident contributes to the breathless interest of the narrative. Some incidents of one of the most romantic lives are thus brought out in relief. The author, as a child, stealing a part of the servant's ornaments and then confessing it to a loving father; his father's last illness during which he escapes from the patient's room to his own bedroom; his trying to turn into a sartorial gentleman when in England; his being thrashed by a European on his first arrival in Pretoria; his treatment by the colonists on his arrival at Dur-

ban; and such other equally well-known incidents are described with an art which many novelists might envy. The facts are presented effectively. Fewest possible words, deftly arranged, sufficient to paint a striking picture. Conversation is natural, though it scarcely throbs with life. Characters have not the promethean spark breathed into them, but are drawn by touches just sufficient to bring out their outstanding features.

As a specimen of literary art, it has its place among the best works in Gujarati prose. Its value as an autobiography arises from two things: the intensely susceptible and rich nature of the author, and his ceaseless struggle with it in every sphere of life. Both are laid bare with a transparent frankness which make the work at once so interesting and so inspiring. One is naturally reminded of Goethe's *Truth and Beauty in my life* and Rousseau's *Confessions*. Mahatma Gandhi is quite as detached as Goethe, if not more, in reviewing his past life. *Atmakatha* certainly lacks the great literary charm of the other two works. It has sincerity but not abandon, literary technique but not literary beauty. It is not the expression of an exuberant temperament but of an effort to control it. It has a hard metallic quality which the other two are free from. Goethe reveals the struggles through which he waded to an artistic detachment; Rousseau tells us of his clumsy dance through life with the thrill of unforgotten joy in his voice; Mahatma Gandhi describes only the ruthlessness

with which he repressed himself. We appreciate the one; we love the other; we revere the last. What detracts from the literary greatness of the 'Atmakatha' scarcely affects its value as one of the most precious of human documents.

## VII

When Mahatma Gandhi's letters come to be published, they will fill volumes of valuable literature. Every letter is a perfect gem, well and appropriately worded, with a ringing note of candour. They are models of conciseness. Many are playful; some loving. Many administer a paternal rebuke; some, with indescribable restraint, hit, and hit well; a few are intimate; scarcely any throbs with the impulse of an unguarded moment. The author adjusts the tone, the language and the perspective of every letter with uncanny precision so as to have the desired effect on the addressee. These letters have provided him with his greatest instrument of controlling the conscience and conduct of his friends and adherents. No man has wielded so great an influence through his letters; and few literary men have written theirs with such art. It is rarely that one comes across such an inimitable epistle as the one he wrote from the Yeravda Jail to the children of the Sabarmati Ashrama.

Ordinary birds cannot fly without wings. With wings of course, all can fly. But if you, without wings, will learn how to fly, then all your troubles will indeed be at an end. And I will teach you.

See, I have no wings, yet I come flying to you every day in thought. Look, here is little Vimala,

here is Hari, and here Dharmakumar. And you also can come flying to me in thought.

There is no need of a teacher for those who know how to think. The teacher may guide us, but he cannot give us the power of thinking. That is latent in us. Those who are wise get wise thoughts.

Tell me who, amongst you, are not praying properly in Prabhubhai's evening prayers.

Send me a letter signed by all, and those who do not know to sign may make a cross.

Bapu's blessings.

Yeravda Palace,  
Silence day.

## VIII

It is, indeed, difficult to interpret the writings of Mahatma Gandhi in a few lines. In the first instance, few, indeed, would have thought in 1914 when he returned from Africa that within a few years, a man almost superhuman in vision and conduct would preside over an ashrama at Sabarmati; that the mahavratas would be observed by him as by the sages of mythology; that he would forge with them a comprehensive movement for achieving national strength and international dignity; that through him the idealism of India would stand vindicated as the means of the world's salvation. But facts stranger than fiction have come to pass. In daily conduct and current literature, truth, non-violence, and stern self-discipline are recognised not as ideals but as living realities. And in a new wave of nationalism, India has found her soul.

Nothing but Truth has existence. Hence the definition of God is *sat*. To me, Truth, is the sovereign principle, which includes all principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in words, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God.

Of late, a life spent in search of this principle has led him a step further. "God is Truth" is now replaced by the formula that "Truth alone is God, a living Almighty Force". This Truth is the end of all efforts. It is to be attained only by an increasing surrender of self and all its values. The path of surrender is along the five Vratas, fundamental to Aryan culture. Non-violence, Truth, Non-stealing, Sexual self-control, and Non-possession. It is to be pursued with humility, at all times, in thought, words and deeds. Its greatest foe is self-satisfied materialism with its results, luxury, strife, industrialism, avarice, egotism.

This Truth is not a philosophical idea to be realised in forests and caves. It has to be pursued actively in all departments of life; in the villages and the slums, in the solution of individual, social and political problems. In the course of this pursuit every detail has to be attended to, practical wisdom applied, and manual labour lifted to a position of dignity. The affairs of man, including politics, have to be purged of untruth and sordidness. Men and women have to be free and equal, subject only to the law of truth and service. Suffering, voluntarily invited, and stern discipline have to replace strife. Re-

volutions have to be achieved by organisation. War, the monstrous child of a godless materialism, has to be replaced by Love. A humble religious attitude of mind has to replace the arrogance underlying modern life. Truth and Non-violence, no longer the impossible standards of ethics, have to inspire collective activities, raising struggling nations, eliminating exploitation, breathing into international affairs a new hope. The poor, the miserable and the down-trodden are Daridra-narayana, the Divine manifested in the miserable, and are to be worshipped with devotion and service. Human life, reared on self-imposed renunciation, is to be a romance full of joy.

‘Satya’, Truth, when working out these results actively, is Satyagraha. Passive resistance, Civil-disobedience and Non-cooperation are its different phases. It is suffering, openly invited and cheerfully borne, in vindication of Truth. It abhors hate and injustice as much as secrecy and diplomacy.

Satyagraha is Love. The law of Love, call it attraction, affinity, cohesion if you like, governs the world. Life persists in face of death. The Universe persists in spite of destruction continually going on. Truth triumphs over untruth. Love conquers hate. God eternally triumphs over Satan. A Satyagrahi has no power he can call his own. All the power he may seem to possess is from God.

Thus Ishvarapranidhana, the attitude of conscious and willing surrender to God’s will, found in saints and martyrs, inspires individual and collective action. This outlook and method are

the proud heritage of Aryan culture. India lives for and through them. Her freedom is but a step towards their becoming world-forces.

After the fiery ordeals of recent years, who dare say that these are impossible ideals?

These teachings have given a new direction to literary currents. Mahatma Gandhi's inexorable demand of himself and others is that every human activity should directly lead to moral and social good. Imagination, revolving in shapes and things of tempting beauty, has no place in his scheme of things. He is the foe of anarchy and individualism, and will not admit the value of romance which does not keep close to the earth. His insistent emphasis on truth challenges the earlier values in art and life. Man's function is to become a unit of an organised whole, except in so far as it is necessary to achieve individual moral triumph. Joy of life, not arising from a sense of duty fulfilled, has no right to exist. Power born of truth, self-discipline and service is the supreme good. Beauty apart from it has little or no significance.

These teachings, coupled with Mahatma Gandhi's indifference to literature as such, has led some to interpret them to mean that the language of literature should be that of the man in the street and that the only test of literature is its immediate usefulness to the masses. His works, however, do not warrant any such inference.

## CHAPTER V

# Gandhi Literature

GANDHI literature might be classified into two—literature written by Gandhiji and literature about Gandhiji.

In literature written by Gandhiji we find every aspect of life dealt with, with an uncanny perception of the human mind. We find in him a literary artist of the highest order. He expresses himself in a stern and brief manner, but with a heart full of kindness. Those who have read his letters to children while in jail would realise that he has a beautiful understanding of the minds of the little ones, and that there is nothing like that in the world's literature except perhaps Peter Pan. On the other side, we have the great indignant outbursts against Lord Birkenhead and Lord Linlithgow. These are also the work of a perfect literary mind. In that sense, "Gandhi literature" is a great contribution and ranks among the world's greatest literary masterpieces.

"Gandhi literature", apart from being a treasure-house of literary masterpieces, discloses a message. His words have the ring of truth.

There is a compactness of word, thought and deed in every syllable. His every word is a liv-

ing embodiment of his sincere belief in Truth. Language, in his hand, has become not merely a vehicle of thought, but a vehicle of the soul. That is why his books are read by millions. His 'Experiments with Truth' is one of the beautiful books in English literature, and might be ranked as the third greatest biography, besides Rousseau's 'Confessions' and Goethe's 'Truth and Beauty.' It will go down to posterity as the greatest work which enshrined Truth.

"Gandhi literature" contains the message of non-violence. In that message, Gandhiji has welded two or three ideas; first, the idea of Tolstoy, "resist not evil by force", and secondly, that of Jesus Christ, "Resist not evil." Gandhiji has evolved a corporate force based on these ideas. By expounding the message of corporate satyagraha, Gandhiji has made a distinct advance over the earlier ideas. He has combined in his method the ideas of Tolstoy and the idea expounded by Lord Sri Krishna in the 'Bhagvad Gita' "one should prefer death to leaving his Swadharma". Gandhiji has shaped Satyagraha into a weapon of tremendous potentialities. It is the weapon of the weak against the strong.

The weapon of Satyagraha will have to be adopted in the future by all small nations of the world. At the end of the war there is going to be only two Great Powers, Russia and the Anglo-American combine. Only these two would be able to produce arms and ammunition in sufficient quantity, and if they combined, the other

nations do not have the slightest chance of becoming free or great. But with satyagraha, they can do wonders in the world. In India, the British imperialists have tried to crush the Gandhian spirit. Though they might have imprisoned a few, they have not conquered the spirit. Satyagraha alone will lead to success.

The third great feature of "Gandhi literature" is that it stands for Moral Order. The present day western world is steeped in materialism.

Gandhiji sincerely believes that, above and beyond material power, there is something divine; a higher law which must be obeyed. He is a mighty successor to the Apostles of Peace and Truth born in every country.

Gandhiji's life is greater than his writings. Since 1920 the British Government has been attempting to break his hold, but has miserably failed. Gandhism cannot be crushed. In spite of these achievements, and in spite of what he has done, Gandhiji considers himself only a humble instrument of God. In history, we find that all great saints completely surrendered themselves to God. Gandhiji must be classed along with those saints, and it is because of his complete surrender to God that he has been able to inspire loyalty among so many millions in this country and abroad.

It is a glory that, in this century, we in India are being led and inspired by a person of the magnitude of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji's

chair at the Peace Conference might remain vacant. Nay, more. There is no chair that the Western nations can produce, which Gandhiji will stoop to occupy.

Gandhiji's place is among the prophets of the world. In him we have got one of the noblest of men.

## CHAPTER VI

## Gandhiji : The Yogi

MY DEAR Dilip Kumar,

You have referred to three men. Dayananda, whom I have revered from infancy; Shri Aravind, whose memory and works shaped my early life to some extent; and Gandhiji whose life has been lighting up many dark corners on my journey to self-realization.

I will postulate the canons of my criterion in such cases.

The highest integration of a man's personality is only possible by the elimination of attachment, fear and anger. Human imagination has tried to create such men, e. g. Shri Krishna. In life, this "self-realisation" has to be captured by effort; call it Yoga, if you like. *Parama Shanti*, the positive "wide calm" is not acquired without it.

But some men can, with comparative ease, set out on the journey. To Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was given almost to reach the journey's end but with little effort. *Raga*, *Bhaya*, *Krodha*, had little innate tenacity in him; and with

an easy effort—compared to others—he attained integration.

Dayananda could drop his 'Raga' easily; he was born void of fear ; he was of an irascible temperament ; but his 'yoga' could divert it into an impersonal channel.

From the absolute point of view his integration was less complete than that of Ramakrishna. 'Parama Shanti', the absolute peace, remained unattained. Shri Arvinda's temperament, I may venture, was more like that of Shri Ramakrishna ; before he started on the journey his 'Raga' and 'Dvesha' were attenuated ; perhaps he was so born. He is the only one of the four Masters under review who started with a vast intellectuality, and a poetic fibre vibrant with an aesthetic sense to which a mastery of the classics had given a rare universality.

Unlike Dayananda, he was not born devoid of fear ; perhaps its stock was not so easily liquidatable as in Ramakrishna's case. I am not quite sure whether his flight to Pondicherry was not inspired by its latent roots.

But he had, so far as one can find from his writings—for, as you know, I have no personal contact—achieved as near an integration as one can in seclusion. His later writings disclose that his attitude is purged of all the three major afflictions—Kleshas ; he is nearer Ramakrishna than any of the other three. His vision is less wide ; its 'Parama Shanti' appears even greater. I use the word 'appear' only because he lives under

peculiar conditions, whose justification I have not the necessary qualification to appraise.

All these three, therefore, attained a high degree of integration. Comparison on that high level is bound to be faulty.

Gandhiji is quite different. He had innate '*Raga*', '*Bhaya*', and '*Krodha*' of tremendous power and tenacity; he has their roots still. They cause turmoils of the soul. To him the path of conquest has been a ceaseless struggle with giants. He has not killed them; he has acquired the power to master them; but the giants are still not tame domestics; he has to master them on stray occasions, still.

His struggle has not been an easy win like those of the other three Masters. It has been a life and death struggle every moment of life. His effort is a mighty epic as compared with the easy lines of beauty which Ramakrishna and Aravinda could write. And to that extent, Gandhiji has been able to claim greater kinship with ordinary men.

According to the test of absolute integration, he would be far behind; among the class of '*Videhas*', to use Patanjali's phrase. If the test is of effort spent or the intensity of the struggle, he stands above them all. And in achievement as Shri Aravinda is the living successor of Shri Ramakrishna, Gandhiji is that of Dayananda.

The former proved the validity of the eternal

truth of integration; the latter has established that affairs of men can be organised by corporate efforts on the lines of that integration.

If Shri Aravinda has given a reintegration of 'Sanatana Dharma', Gandhiji has given to India—its home—a position and to the world a weapon of non-violence without which 'Dharma' itself would stand but as a philosophic doctrine or an esoteric practice.

If I have ventured on a bold quest of values, pray, forgive me; but I must write what I feel, and with my limited vision, can see.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

## CHAPTER VII

# Architect Of The Nation : The Political Aspect

WRITING about one aspect of Gandhiji's achievement is a lame attempt. But it is one of the finest chapters in the history of world politics. Thirty-two years ago Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa. The halo of a settlement of the Indian question in South Africa was round him. He was already called the Mahatma ; but leading Indian politicians, except perhaps Gokhale, classed him among harmless oddities.

The Liberals were in control of the Congress. Lokamanya Tilak, as an extremist, was a practical outlaw. Dr. Besant's Home Rule Movement had not been started. When World War I came upon us, the Indian fight for freedom had no strong leader, no clear objective, no steel frame, and no fighting machine.

Besant stepped into the void, allied herself with Tilak, and captured the Congress. The objective was Home Rule ; the steel frame was supplied—to one by the Theosophical Society, to the other by the Chitpavan leaders of Maharashtra and the Central Provinces. Das and Nehru joined them.

Suddenly Gandhiji emerged on the scene. He was not only a leader but a Messiah with a vision and a faith in God's will—which he called Truth and Non-violence—which made his will inflexible.

He had his objective worked out in a Gujarati book written in South Africa : a mercilessly logical scheme. He had faith in himself to create abundant loyalty in those with whom he came in close contact ; and a steel-frame was soon growing up around him. He had no fighting machine, but only technique—but one which he had evolved, tried and had found successful in South Africa.

He came, he saw, he conquered—at Bombay, at Amritsar, at Nagpur, at Calcutta. He took over the Congress, and gave it the true edge of a fighting machine. After well-nigh thirty years, it is his, though on most points he disagrees with most of its members. He can break it or its other leaders, if he chooses. But he won't do it—never. He is too far-sighted.

Truth and Non-violence was almost a new message—and with the success of Satyagraha, a new earth and a heaven were in sight, at least to millions of adoring Indians. They saw in this fasting, praying Mahatma, the promised one who was to lead them from darkness to light, the fulfilment of long cherished dreams of political independence structured on Moral Order of the Rule of Dharma, which in their minds was ulti-

mately associated with the best in their tradition and culture.

And what a prophet! A shrewd lawyer, an astute politician, an uncanny negotiator—and yet a saint, an ascetic and a Vedic Rishi all in one, who delivered messages that thrilled hearts and drove men to collective action.

But he was such, mainly to the Hindus. An antithesis was already created by British policies in separate electorates for Muslims. This device was churning up religio-political reactionaries.

The World War I ended. The Treaty of Versailles let upon the flood gates of sentimental democracy; slogans of self-determination, of world peace, of wars to end wars, of rights of minorities, of masses, swayed the human mind. The world's millions were awakened to a new hope.

But the Western Democracies were unable to gather faith. In Moscow Lenin laid the foundation of a quasi-theocratic State in Russia; only the Father, Son and Holy Ghost were substituted by Marx, Lenin, and the infallible doctrine of Communism. Men, women, and children drilled and dragooned by force and propaganda, were lashed into action by an urge more fanatic than ever Islam inspired.

The other man was Gandhiji. He laid the foundation of a sort of Church—of which he was the Head, and his principal lieutenants, the

cardinals:—austere life, jail, sacrifice, self-surrender to the Cause was the way of salvation. The early Gandhian Congress was more like the early Christian Church, its fasts and penances, its lure for martyrdom. Evil was to be resisted by suffering and collective pressure—but not by physical force. People were hoping for peace; now peace had descended and with it a weapon which could overcome all violence. Gandhiji, more like Moses than any one else, was the prophet, the final arbiter, the irresistible General. In this wise he acquired complete mastery of the Collective Unconscious of the largest section of Indians.

The Muslim Collective Unconscious in the bulk, however, eluded him. By tradition, history, and way of life, to a Muslim the Hindu was a *Kafir* to be hunted down. The Hindu-Muslim antagonism was not a thing of yesterday. It had its roots in Ghaznavi and Khilji massacres. But Gandhi is perhaps the greatest practical expert at mobilising Collective Auto-suggestion, ever born. He inspired a series of beliefs in the country to counteract this evil. “Muslims are brothers.” “Without Muslim-Hindu unity there is no Swaraj.” “Muslims must have self-determination.” “If you want Indian unity, study Urdu and write the Persian script.” “Concede Pakistan with but a loose centre.” In his name and under his inspiration thousands shouted the slogans, believed in them. But the appeal was largely to the Hindu mind. Eminent Muslims like Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari, Maulana

Mohamedali and Shaukatali, Maulana Azad and, of course, a few thousand others were drawn to Gandhiji—but to his politics and his personal charm. He could never wield over the Muslim Unconscious the potent and uncanny mastery which he acquired over the Hindu Unconscious.

Gandhiji believed—and millions believed with him, and many do so still—that Hindu-Muslim antagonism was a creation of the British. And he worked with the energy of a Titan that Britain should quit in order that Hindus and Muslims become one.

But where he could not master, he was prepared to woo. And twice he attained success. Maulana Mohamedali had a great hold on the Muslim masses. Gandhiji wooed and won him, though for a time. And the country rang with "Hindu-Mussalman-ki-jai." The alliance was broken and the few nationalist Muslims who stood by Gandhiji lost their hold over Muslims. The next powerful leader to ally himself with Gandhiji was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. But in truth it was a confederacy between the two respective leaders.

To use Hegelian formula the Gandhi thesis of concentrated nationalism produced the anti-thesis of the Pakistan Movement. Gandhiji's ceaseless efforts to seek an alliance with Jinnah failed, for the latter, with cold-blooded perspicacity, realised that it was sure, to be a step to a national state for India which he abhorred above everything else.

World War II came. Gandhiji's one ambition after 1940, both political and moral, was to keep India, or at any rate the Congress out of the war. The "Quit India" movement was launched. The war situation shaped to suit his end. The British were a cultured people and had a horror of seeking more unpopularity than was necessary. After a short spell of strong repression, they relaxed their vehemence. Germany and Japan could not meet in India as planned. Indians, all over the world, earned military glory. The British came out of the war, weak, disorganised, bankrupt ; unable to hold their far-flung Empire. They decided to quit India.

But the more the desired end came nearer, the stronger grew the antithesis. The Muslim masses were as much behind Jinnah as the Hindu masses and non-Muslim minorities behind Gandhiji.

In the nature of things Hindu-Muslim antagonism could not be won over except by pressure politics. That having been abjured, India became divided into two ; four-fifths of India, predominantly Hindu, pledged to self-determination and non-violence, and one-fifth, conclusively Muslim, pledged to religio-political aggrandisement and to methods foreign to non-violence.

The only mighty fact was Gandhiji's tremendous hold over the Hindu Unconscious and the Congress. Those who eluded his hold were massed in a hostile camp. The greatest man in

history, as the dispassionate historian must proclaim Gandhiji to be, in the hour of his triumph had secured the independence of his country by non-violent means, but was faced with the iron bar of reality. His personality and creed had no appeal for the man who had not developed the requisite cultural sympathy with the ideals he stood for.

In the Punjab and Bengal where his message had been accepted only by a section of Hindus and Sikhs, these communities remained disorganised, a prey to organised violence. Non-violence, which he thought had prevailed, was for the moment shattered when faced with undiluted barbarism. In this crisis, shrewd hard-headed politician took charge, divided the country, assumed control of her destinies. Masses of men worshipping Gandhiji, under pressure of organised violence, forgot his message and repelled barbarism by barbarism. A mighty tragedy is being enacted in which non-violence and all godly things are as if naught.

The Nation, which its father had shaped and strengthened, came to realise its real shape and context. The geographical area of its power could not go beyond the psychological frontiers drawn by its father's creative influence. And so realizing, it sought its salvation by sacrificing area to homogeneity. And in doing so, it also realised the limitations of non-violence.

Transcending the work of Caesars, Akbars

and Napoleons, Gandhiji found chaos and gave order ; found timidity and left courage ; found divisions and built a nation ; found frustration and created a destiny ; broke the chains of an Imperial Power and founded a World Power ; without subterfuge and the might of armed forces. More than this no man has done or could do.

In this crisis, when politicians have dropped the role of saints, Gandhiji has dropped the role of the politicians, and remained what he fundamentally is : the Apostle of Non-violence. With eddying waves of passion mounting sky-high around him, he goes to Noakhali, to Calcutta, to Delhi. And his voice is raised in Prophetic tones, pleading for love. Like all other prophets he bears his cross—of his vision of divinity blurred by the brutish lust of men. But with a Prophet's unfaltering vision he gives utterance to the Voice which speaks through him.

## CHAPTER VIII

# Gandhiji's Fast

FROM our ordinary point of view Gandhiji's fast would appear to complicate the already complicated situation. We are resisting Pakistan in Kashmir and in the Security Council. The hands of our National Government are full with difficult problems. At such a time, this fast would put a great emotional strain on the country. But Gandhiji's is the vision and inspiration of a great mystic. We, with our limited vision, have no right to quarrel with what he considers a mandate from God. And, as we have seen more than once, Gandhiji's fast works miracles.

His message, through this fast, is principally addressed to Hindus over whom his influence is immense. It points to an eternal truth: anger, collective and individual, is an unmitigated evil and must be controlled. Hindus are angry, there is no denying the fact. The last week's occurrences in Hyderabad (Sind) and Gujrat (Punjab) add to a long list of provocations. The fast is expected to fill the hearts of Hindus with tolerance for those who have inflicted untold suffering and

humiliation on them. Will this fast reconcile Indian Muslim Leaders to Indian Nationalism? I may be permitted to doubt; they may, on the contrary, read in the fast a justification for their refusal to transfer allegiance to India.

Another cause of Gandhiji's fast is stated to be the 'rot' in Congress political life. It must not be forgotten that the whole Congress life in most parts of the country is in the melting pot. Naturally, rivalries, ambitions and differences in outlook are rife. The Congress from being an anti-British party has overnight been converted into the sole party of power in the country. This has also blurred values. It will take some time to evolve a healthy tradition of discipline. To the whole country, therefore, the fast will serve as a grave warning.

In order to appreciate the fast of Gandhiji one must have studied the ways of mystics. His fast is his prayer to God to give him the necessary strength to vindicate the moral order. When a mystic feels his impotence in the face of evil, he always extracts strength from Above by staking his life in humility and cheerfulness. Gandhiji comes from a long line of apostles whose lives have been one intense longing for the fulfilment of their missions or for death.

I am sure this fast will mobilise the emotions of the citizens of Delhi and peace will be restored. But how long friendliness will rule will

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largely depend upon the change of heart among the Muslims in this country.

In the meantime, we can all pray that Gandhiji may come out triumphant from this self-imposed ordeal

## CHAPTER IX

**An Age Closes**

I CANNOT write about Gandhiji; since my first collapse, when I saw him in his last moment, my mind has developed a protective armour against the shock. I know he is dead; I cannot feel that he is no more. I have a persistent subconscious sense that if I walk across the terrace from my room in the Birla House and go into Bapu's room, I will receive the same affectionate smile, which he gave me on Thursday evening when I went to his room.

Sometimes, he gave me the privilege of placing my views on non-violence and truth as I had come to consider his life as a living commentary on the *Yogasutra* and *Bhagavadgita*. I took advantage of this occasion to resume a discussion which had been left unfinished in 1945.

"Bapu, I will start by offering my humble congratulations", I said.

"Why congratulations?" he asked.

I then reminded him of our discussion about *Ahinsa*, with reference to *Yogasutra* and Tolstoy; of what I had told him in 1945 that the

non-violent movement of 1942 did not stand the scriptural test of *Ahinsa*, as it evoked wrath in the enemy and not love. For, Patanjali had said that when *Ahinsa* is realized by a person others come to him with love.

"This time the test has been satisfied," I added, "when you went on your fast, the Muslims who had hated you all these years, came to love you. The Hindus, who loved you, learnt self-restraint". Then I gave him a picture of the affairs in Hyderabad. Rajkumari, about this time, joined us.

I left at 7 p.m. hoping to see him the next day. But the next day I was at the States Ministry at 5-25 p.m. when one of the Birla chauffeurs brought the news that Gandhiji had been shot at. I could not believe it. Who would kill this Prince of Peace?

I ran to the telephone. The report was confirmed. Stunned, I got into my car and sped to the Birla House. My mind was in a daze.

I ran in—and into his room. He lay on his usual bed. His pallid face had the immobility of death. Manu and Ava and other girls were near his head. Sardar sat, grief-laden but strong, with a comforting arm round Panditji, who was sobbing. I turned to Col. Bhargav who was standing by the side and in mute reply he shook his head. Death was there, grim and cruel, with Gandhiji in its relentless grasp. I broke down. Gandhiji was gone. I was an orphan.

Another doctor came and put his stethoscope on Gandhiji's chest and lifted the cover. I saw three bleeding wounds. Out of my agonised soul, sobs came.

Manu started reciting the *Bhagvadgita*. Her voice broke down at every syllable. Maniben, Pyarelal and I joined. As we recited the Gita a vision came before me. Shree Krishna died by a stray arrow. Socrates died by poison. Christ was crucified. Gandhiji died of bullet shots. All four Masters met their death in an unnatural way. But perhaps it was an appropriate climax to an epic life. Of these again, Socrates and Jesus treated as criminals, met their death at the hands of an outraged society. Shree Krishna died at the hands of an obscure hunter. Gandhiji, at the hands of an enemy of peace and therefore of man's destiny on earth.

He organised India into a Nation. He gave it a national language. He created for it a new tradition. He built a governing corporation. He led the Nation's fight to freedom. He presided at the birth of its independence. He received its unstinted homage when he died. His was the word which swayed India's mighty government. And he achieved all this in the manner of a true democrat, by the spoken and the written word, without hurting a hair of his enemy's head.

But these political achievements which place him at the head of the world's political liberators are nothing as compared to his moral achievements. He made men out of slaves. He set the

womanhood of India free. He purged society of untouchability. He broke the iron grooves in which our society was cast. He killed 'other worldliness' which was India's obsession. He removed the curse of inferiority complex which had been fastened on our collective sub-conscious by nine hundred years of foreign domination. He gave back to Indians the pride in their own culture and the confidence in their strength—all of which they had lost—and more, their soul. He reintegrated India's immortal culture and set it once again on a career of world conquest. He was the apostle of a new life.

But more. He tried to realise the fundamentals of Aryan Culture in himself and gave them a fresh validity. His was a life-long effort at integrating his personality by obtaining a supremacy over attachment, fear and wrath. He was a living testimony of the fact that Moral Order was a living force. He realised non-violence in himself and enemies came to him with their love. He realised Truth and his actions bore lasting fruit. He gave up sex attachment, and he lived in undecaying vigour. He gave up the lure of money, and wealth came to him unasked for the noble purposes he undertook. He abjured possessions and he knew the meaning of life. He lived in God and God lived in him.

As he came and lived, so did he die, an instrument of God. His life—every minute of it—was a prayerful offering to Him; his death was

but a prompt departure at His bidding, his duty done. And his end was splendid; for, a nation was disconsolate, and the world was rocked with sorrow, and whirling Time stood still to pay him homage.

Emperor, Apostle and Yogi—to me personally father and guide—life to me, as to thousands, is but a void without you!

## CHAPTER X

## Greater Than His Deeds

GANDHIJI has created the Indian Nation of today. He has built up a vast hierarchic organisation in the country—a feat unparalleled in history when we remember that it was done by non-violent means. He has been the supreme spokesman of the Moral Order in a world which has abandoned itself to brutal ways.

These are achievements. What he is, however, is greater than all that he has done and does.

The other day I sat near a delegate from the Philippines in one of the sittings of the Asian Conference. I saw that he was a bundle of nerves. He was expecting Gandhiji to arrive.

Gandhiji came. The delegate moved a step, his eyes fixed on the frail, wizened body. Some minutes later he went up the platform and shook hands with Gandhiji. When he returned to his seat he was all aglow with excitement. "It was worthwhile travelling six thousand miles to shake hands with him," he told me. He had seen a vision of human grandeur.

Once at Wardha, I saw a couple of young girls crying, almost in convulsions. They formed part of the little family which Gandhiji almost

always takes with him. A great catastrophe, I felt, was overtaking them. I asked them what had happened. Bapu, they replied, had decided to go to Bombay without them.

My little daughter, for a year or two, was part of this family. She came back to us at intervals. I saw that she was love-mad. She talked of what Bapu had told her, of how he teased her, how he admired her curls, how she brought him food. She pinned his photograph in front of her bed. It was a case of madness which overtook the *gopis*, when the youthful Shri Krishna played his flute in ancient Vrindavan. In this case Shri Krishna was a seventy year old toothless "mickey-mouse of a man,"—as Mrs. Naidu once called him,—who, in return for our loyalty, gives nothing but hard grinding work, a life of stern discipline, poverty, jail.

His influence penetrates the subconscious of people who have never heard anything but his name. When in jail in Bijapur (Bombay presidency), a sort of wardenship of political prisoners came to my lot. I found the vagaries of two hundred odd political prisoners rather trying. One political—from North India—a boy of about twentyfive—was the limit. His favourite pastime was to lower his head and charge another young "political" from behind, like an angry bull, and put his head between the other's legs and try to lift him. The other boy almost always fell down. I had given an undertaking to the

authorities to see that discipline was maintained, and I found myself at my wit's end. I called the youngster one day and solemnly told him that I was writing to Gandhiji about his behaviour, which, I hastened to add, was everything a Gandhian's should not be.

"And what would Bapu do?" he asked.

"Fast."

"For how many days?"

"Of course, till you alter your ways."

"And if I don't?"

"He may," I added rather wickedly, "fast perhaps unto death."

The youngster was miserable. He left me and came to me in the morning. "Please don't write to Gandhiji. I won't do it again," he said.

To the boy, Gandhiji was a name, but a name as dear to him as God. He never played his pranks again.

There has been quite a race of small Mahatmas in India who try to model themselves on him. Humour does not form part of their make-up. There was X for instance, who had pledged himself to be devoted to Truth, like Gandhiji. He asked the Superintendent of the jail for a bottle of hair oil, as his head was aching. The bottle was given to him. A few days later, his charkha began to creak, and, in a fit of moral

irresponsibility, he poured a few drops of the hair oil in the socket of the charkha. That night he was torn by scruples. He had asked for the oil for his hair and he had used it for the charkha ; it was *Untruth*.

Next day he stood up before the Superintendent and asked for punishment. He had committed, he said, a jail offence. "What is it ?"—asked the Superintendent, surprised at a prisoner who was so anxious to be punished. X replied that he had misused the hair oil.

The remarks of the Superintendent are unprintable.

During my self-imposed wardenship in Bijapur there was Z who followed the Mahatma, did the jail task scrupulously, read his *Gita* at 4 a. m. in the morning and 6 p.m. in the evening, and led a saintly life. One morning he went on a fast for an unlimited period. Due to my intervention we had a happy time within the walls, the jail authorities having no trouble, and we having practically no enforced discipline and no punishment. How I did it is irrelevant. When I found that the little Mahatma had gone on a hunger strike, I was aghast. The authorities will intervene ; the web of security we had woven would be destroyed ; and the coming months would be terrible.

I asked Z the reason. The reason was characteristically Mahatmic. It appeared to him

that untruth prevailed in jail, because his soul was not sufficiently pure. He was now cleansing it by a fast. I asked him about the untruth. He frankly told me. First, by my intervention, it appeared to him, the jail rules were not being properly observed by the politicals ; secondly, a "C" class prisoner was being given wheat bread by some B class friends surreptitiously ; thirdly, a "C" class young boy was smoking cigarettes clandestinely brought into jail. He wanted, he said, to purge the impurities of his soul so that Truth may triumph in the jail.

My heart sank within me. All my efforts of months to make the jail life comfortable for my friends were crashing on Z's purity of soul. I appreciated his point of view. But to my eternal shame be it said, that I did not feel like dying to co-operate in his saintly effort.

I had a talk with the Superintendent. Z was removed to a solitary cell. Day after day I went to him, beseeching him not to make the life of two hundred youngsters miserable. For, if he continued his fast, the I. G. P. would ask for an explanation, and then—goodbye to peace and comfort for a year.

On the fourth day, Z's conscience was stung by a doubt: 'No one should break a plighted word.' He said, "Munshiji, yesterday a thought struck me. Mahatmaji's favourite verse runs: 'Better to die than to break one's word.' When last year we accepted your wardenship at a meeting, we took a pledge to accept your directions in the

matter of jail life. I was thinking whether, in view of the pledge, I would be justified in disobeying your mandate, if you ordered me to break my fast."

A mighty brain wave came rushing. "Of course, you gave me the pledge, and of course you are breaking the pledge by not heeding my request to break your fast."

But Z had a clear conscience: "Why? you have not given me a mandate. You are only begging me to give up my fast."

I rose to the occasion: "Here and now, I give you the mandate. Break your fast. 'The way of Raghu's family is, life may be lost but not the plighted word' sang Tulsidas, and that is the line which Mahatmaji sings every day."

"Is it your mandate?"

"Yes."

And I got the Jamadar to produce a glass of citrus juice. The fast was broken.

These incidents, to the worldly, may have a ludicrous aspect, but there is another aspect too. These were ordinary men from ordinary life, good-natured, insignificant folk. But Gandhiji's influence had given them a great moral purpose lifting their insignificance into the region of the sublime.

But there was Prof. Bhansali too—Bawaji, as we called him; the silent stoic, his body his only

possession, trained to superhuman hardihood. To some extent I was responsible for his going on a fast in 1942 to secure an inquiry into the Chimur affair, in which White soldiers on their frightful campaign against the "Quit India Movement" had been reported to be guilty of the rape of women. For sixty-three days—I forget the number, it may be sixty-five—Bawaji lay at Wardha, cheerfully inviting death to vindicate the purity of women. At last the authorities began to negotiate; I acted as an intermediary on his behalf in the negotiations.

Bawaji, almost on his death bed, gave me an authority in these words. "I leave you a free hand, but only one injunction. Don't worry about my body; let it fall. But see that Bapu's reputation comes to no harm." And tears were in my eyes as I saw Bawaji's faith in Gandhiji. I have no doubt that had he died during the fast, like unto the soldier of Napoleon who shouted "*Vive le Empereur*" with his last breath, he would have shouted—"Long live Gandhiji".

Many think that Gandhiji is a tyrant to those near him; I have found him different. I am made curiously; when I feel convinced, I cannot accept another's view easily. And on many occasions Gandhiji has let me place my views frankly before him, and tolerated me with generous indulgence, rare in a human being of such unbending will. But he knows I have no mental reservations from him; and that is perhaps the reason he has been a father to me—and much more, for he has taught

me to grow on my own lines and himself enjoyed doing it. Even at the risk of being autobiographical, I cannot help narrating two incidents.

After the Karachi Congress (1931) a little incident brought me closer to Gandhiji. I had joined him in April 1930 without having come into close personal contact, but I expected that after he came out of jail, he would accept my services in the spirit in which I had offered them. But, the jealousies which had been roused during the Civil Disobedience Movement, had led some kind friends assiduously to circulate a rumour that both my wife and I were in some way insidiously connected with the bureaucracy, while the struggle was in progress. In those days, a whisper of that kind could destroy anyone. Nobody cared to inquire what motive I could have, what benefit I could gain, by changing my old position at the Bar and in the public for that of an abettor of a foreign bureaucracy. Wherever I went, whispers of this calumny were spread in advance. Within a few hours of his release from Jail, Gandhiji had come to know of it. I sought an early opportunity to discuss the matter with him.

I remember the walk, which Gandhiji and myself had together on the Hornby Vellard at 5 o'clock in the early morning. He told me of what he had heard and added that he was not prepared to believe the calumny. At that moment, my mortification knew no bounds. I had come to Gandhiji out of an irresistible inner urge, not in expectation of any reward; and, for

no fault of mine, I was being branded as a political outcast. With a voice choking with emotion, I told him that I would not like to continue under the shadow of calumnies and would like to go back to my old life, away from politics. But he had the gift of understanding and, with his inimitable sweetness, he consoled me. Such a thing, he said, was not uncommon in politics and we all had to survive it. He promised to see that the calumny was properly dealt with.

On the solitary road, with the sea thundering at our feet and the stars watching overhead, I realized how truly great he was.

When we parted, he was no longer my political chief; he had entered my life.

The next incident was in 1941. By that time I had seen that most of us only talked the language of Gandhiji's non-violence. We were only normal human beings with a new slogan of loyalty. Then came the first series of Pakistan riots at Dacca and Ahmedabad. Gandhiji issued a statement to the effect that no Congressmen could defend by violence, nor take violent measures to combat communal hooligans. My whole soul rose in revolt. This was impossible, nay, dangerous. 'The wicked have to be destroyed,' said Shri Krishna, and this was all wrong. I wanted to keep my pledge to remain true to myself, and wrote a frank letter to Gandhiji. He called me to Wardha and

had long talks with me. He advised me to go out of the Congress and preach my Truth as I saw it. I shuddered at the prospect of leaving the Congress; it would be an end to my political life. But he told me to vindicate my own Truth; it was necessary, he said, that I should evolve on my own lines. I broke down. He assured me that he would watch over me as before.

When I lay in jail, almost dying, I had pledged myself, that if I lived I would not remain silent when my own Truth as I saw it, was in danger, whatever it might cost. I tried to keep my pledge and within a few days, I was out of the Congress.

I left the Congress, went out on my "Akhand Hindustan" tour, spoke against the betrayal of Non-violence by people who used it as a cloak for cowardice.

Since then I have disagreed with Gandhiji on more than one point where my own Truth demanded it. And yet with a large-heartedness I never dreamt of, he has never allowed the least shadow of estrangement to come between him and me. He has watched over my evolution with a mother's affectionate eye. And when the time was ripe he asked me to come back into the Congress. I cannot think of another masterful World Figure in history who could have treated a follower with such noble generosity.

But it is not generosity. It is Non-violence as Love. "L" was a great masterful follower

of his; closer to him than many others. He controlled a large organisation. Already married, he fell in love with an unmarried girl. Gandhiji himself told me the story. "I asked him to confess the truth. Ultimately he did. The next day, in a public meeting, I told the audience about his lapse. But I assured him that I would not forsake him. I have taken charge of the girl and she is now in the hospital, where she was delivered of a child. I will look after the mother and the child. He is now here with me, looking after me. In no other way can he be saved from public disgrace. Love is not a knot that can be cut to pieces by a sword."

And, as he told me, the echoes of the far-off words of yet another Prophet forgiving the sins of Mary Magdalene floated to my ears.

Whenever I am with him, he challenges me in unspoken accents. Have I been at my best? Have I risen above the lures of flesh, of selfishness, of vanity? And I come out as if from a bath, purged of impurities, inspired by high purpose to struggle on to unknown heights. That is why the words used by Alcibiades for Socrates are so true of Gandhiji.

"When I hear him speak, my heart leaps up far more than the hearts of those who celebrate the Corybantic mysteries; my tears are poured out as he talks, a thing I have often seen happen to many others besides myself. I have heard Pericles and other excellent orators, and have

been pleased with their discourses, but I suffered nothing of this kind; nor was my soul ever on those occasions disturbed and filled with self-reproach, as if it were slavishly laid prostrate. But this Marsyas here had often affected me in the way I describe, until the life which I lived seemed hardly worth living. Do not deny it, Socrates, for I know well that if even now I chose to listen to you, I could not resist, but should again suffer the same effect. I stop my ears, therefore, my friends, as from the Sirens, and flee away, as fast as possible, that I may not sit down beside him, and grow old in listening to his talk. For this man has reduced me to feel the sentiment of shame. For, I feel in his presence my incapacity of refuting what he says, or of refusing to do that which he directs; but when I depart from him the glory which the multitude confers overwhelms me. I escape, therefore, and hide myself from him, and when I see him I am overwhelmed with humiliation, because I have neglected to do what I have confessed to him ought to be done; and often have I wished that he were no longer to be seen among men. But if that were to happen I well know that I should suffer far greater pain; so that where I can turn, or what I can do with this man I know not. All this have I and many others suffered from the pipings of this satyr."

That is why Gandhiji has made himself a conscience-keeper of hundreds of men and women.





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